

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1952.All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1952.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from September Quarter, 1951.	Increase from June Quarter, 1952.
		%	%	%
Brisbane ..	2,094	142.6	16.6	1.5
Toowoomba ..	2,107	147.6	15.7	0.7
Rockhampton ..	2,112	145.3	16.1	1.1
Townsville ..	2,175	138.5	16.9	1.5
Bundaberg ..	2,078	147.1	16.0	1.3
Warwick ..	2,094	154.7	16.3	1.6

For three quarters in succession the retail price index for Brisbane has now shown a smaller rate of increase. Increases for the last four quarters have been 7.7, 3.7, 2.9, and 1.5 per cent. respectively. A smaller rise than the latest figure of 1.5 per cent. has been recorded only once in the last five years - in the March quarter of 1949, when the rise was only 0.3 per cent., owing chiefly to a reduction in retailers' margins permitted on clothing prices.

The increases were very similar in the three major sections of the index number for Brisbane, food and groceries increasing by 1.4 per cent., clothing and footwear by 1.6 per cent., and miscellaneous items by 1.5 per cent. In three of the provincial cities the food and groceries section showed a decrease, the first decreases for a long period. More stable, or in some instances, lower, meat prices were the main cause of the smaller increases in food prices, the only important rise being in butter.

Clothing and footwear prices rose most in Bundaberg (2.5 per cent.) among the six recorded cities, Townsville (0.5 per cent.) showing the smallest increase. The principal increases were in women's clothing. Miscellaneous items showed increases varying from 4.9 per cent. in Warwick and 4.1 per cent. in Toowoomba to 1.5 per cent. in Brisbane. The higher increases in the Downs cities were due to adjustments in electricity charges which come irregularly and thus affect different cities at different times.

For the combined index of all items, the increases in three cities - Townsville (1.5 per cent.), Bundaberg (1.3 per cent.), and Warwick (1.6 per cent.) - were very close to that for Brisbane. In Rockhampton (1.1 per cent.) and Toowoomba (0.7 per cent.), the increases were less. The smallness of the rise for Toowoomba was due to a decrease in meat prices, but nevertheless Toowoomba's total increase since 1938-39 (147.6 per cent.) has been greater than that for Brisbane (142.6 per cent.). Compared with 1938-39, the largest total increase has been shown by Warwick (154.7 per cent.) and the smallest by Townsville (138.5 per cent.) which, however, still has the highest prices of any of the six cities.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases^a, September Quarter, 1952.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1952.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	176.5	1.4	267.8	1.6	98.0	1.5
Toowoomba ..	195.0	-1.4	264.3	1.9	98.0	4.1
Rockhampton	169.9	-0.3	263.3	1.4	103.2	2.5
Townsville	165.0	2.4	262.5	0.5	103.4	1.8
Bundaberg ..	165.6	-0.2	269.7	2.5	97.1	3.2
Warwick ..	185.1	1.1	269.0	1.0	99.9	4.9

Food and Groceries.

During the September quarter, variations in the food and groceries index numbers ranged from an increase of 2.4 per cent. in Townsville to a decrease of 1.4 per cent. in Toowoomba. The principal changes recorded were increased prices for butter and cheese, and decreases in the prices of meat, potatoes, onions, and eggs.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Warwick, but increased in Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville by 1.2 per cent., 2.7 per cent., and 0.5 per cent. respectively.

Clothing and Footwear.

The increase of 1.6 per cent. in the clothing and footwear index for Brisbane was the lowest quarterly increase since the March quarter of 1950 when 1.3 per cent. was recorded. The increase was due chiefly to higher prices for women's underwear and dearer footwear.

Miscellaneous Items.

Increases in the miscellaneous items index numbers were caused by higher prices of smoking and recreation items, higher charges for gas in Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville, and for both gas and electricity in Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Warwick.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1952, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	1½	1	0	3½	19	7¾		19	9¾		1	0	8
Rockhampton ..	1	0	2	1	0	4¼	18	5¾		1	0	1¾	1	0	10½
Townsville ..	1	0	9¼	1	1	4¾	19	8¼		19	11¾		1	1	6½
Bundaberg ..		19	10¼	1	0	3¾	15	5¼		1	0	4¼	1	0	9
Warwick ..	1	0	0	1	0	4½	16	8½		19	11½		1	1	3¼

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased slightly during the quarter in Townsville and Warwick, but decreased in Bundaberg, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba. The largest of these variations occurred in Toowoomba where the cost of purchasing goods costing £1 in Brisbane decreased by 1¾d.

Variations in the cost of purchasing food and groceries costing £1 in Brisbane ranged from an increase of 2½d. in Townsville to a decrease of 6¾d. in Toowoomba. The only increase recorded was in Townsville.

Only small variations were recorded in the relative prices of clothing and footwear.

In relation to Brisbane, prices of miscellaneous items retained much the same relativity in Townsville, but increased in the other cities covered by the survey. These increases were due chiefly to the fact that in the fuel portion of the index only gas charges increased in Brisbane and Townsville, while gas and electricity charges increased in Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Warwick and gas and firewood charges in Rockhampton.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the September quarter 1952, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st November, 1952. The index numbers, the new wage rates, and the amounts of the adjustments are shown in the next table. The latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated, are also shown. Commonwealth rates operated from the beginning of the first full pay period in November.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 3rd Quarter, 1952.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.				
		Males. ^a	Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.		
		£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			
Brisbane	2,094	10 16 0	3 0	10 16 0	7 4 6	3.11.52		
Sydney	2,298	11 17 0	2 0	11 17 0	8 17 6	1.11.52		
Melbourne	2,218	11 8 0	4 0	(11 8 0)	a	1.11.52 ^b		
Adelaide	2,225	11 9 0	5 0	11 9 0	8 11 6	1.11.52		
Perth	2,216	11 8 0	6 0	11 18 6	7 15 0	27.10.52		
Hobart	2,231	11 10 0	8 0	(11 10 0)	a	1.11.52 ^b		

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b No State wage declared. The rate shown is that of the Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

30th October, 1952.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.
Brisbane	863	1,079	2,025	1,796	1,934	2,006	2,064	2,094
Toowoomba	851	1,092	2,042	1,821	1,944	2,022	2,093	2,107
Rockhampton ..	861	1,084	2,046	1,819	1,950	2,033	2,090	2,112
Townsville	912	1,119	2,101	1,861	2,006	2,082	2,142	2,175
Bundaberg	841	1,059	2,012	1,792	1,911	2,008	2,052	2,078
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	1,082	2,032	1,804	1,940	2,014	2,072	2,101
Warwick	822	1,073	2,017	1,800	1,918	1,994	2,061	2,094

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.
Brisbane	856	971	2,284	1,847	2,145	2,290	2,334	2,367
Toowoomba	814	1,010	2,334	1,904	2,169	2,332	2,434	2,401
Rockhampton ..	895	1,012	2,348	1,931	2,194	2,373	2,416	2,409
Townsville	955	1,057	2,428	1,996	2,281	2,429	2,472	2,531
Bundaberg	903	1,027	2,330	1,909	2,142	2,377	2,403	2,398
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	984	2,303	1,869	2,159	2,311	2,357	2,384
Warwick	846	1,000	2,318	1,943	2,165	2,311	2,385	2,412

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1952.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.	March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.
Brisbane	829	1,454	2,960	2,787	2,864	2,923	3,002	3,049
Toowoomba	829	1,429	2,925	2,773	2,819	2,896	2,965	3,020
Rockhampton ..	845	1,477	2,989	2,788	2,898	2,961	3,027	3,070
Townsville	840	1,457	2,973	2,794	2,878	2,938	3,029	3,045
Bundaberg	839	1,447	3,005	2,839	2,925	2,965	3,027	3,102
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	1,454	2,962	2,788	2,866	2,926	3,004	3,050
Warwick	825	1,441	2,957	2,751	2,858	2,913	3,014	3,044